



on the

Spring 2011

# COAST

a coastal issues newsletter from your Texas General Land Office



Chief Clerk Larry Laine touts the beautiful new beach at his old stomping grounds.

## Surfside Beach Restoration

Surfside Beach was once known as Texas' premiere surf spot, but years of unchecked erosion and damage from Hurricane Ike had left a dangerous mess. The beach was all but gone, and the waves lapping at Beach Drive threatened to destroy roads, sewer systems and private homes. However, a recently completed Texas General Land Office project combined local, state and federal money to renourish the beach and repair a protective stone revetment, essentially revitalizing the village of Surfside.

Chief Clerk Larry Laine and Surfside Mayor Larry Davison cut a ribbon in mid-March to rededicate the expansive new swath of sand, more than 10,000 dump trucks worth shipped by barge and truck from the Port of Bay City.

"Look at that beach, Surfside is back!" said Laine, a one-time Surfside resident. "We worked hard to get this project done before Spring Break so everyone can enjoy the best new beach in Texas."

Surfside Beach suffers from one of the highest erosion rates on the Texas coast. Years of erosion—sometimes as much as 16 feet a year—had thinned the beach to a san-

dy ribbon. Hurricane Ike destroyed dozens of structures and the remainder of the beach, leaving the gulf's waves lapping at Beach Drive and threatening to claim more victims.

After Ike, Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson made the preservation and restoration of Surfside Beach a priority. The result was a project to renourish the beach and rebuild and enhance the protective stone revetment to withstand a 25-year storm event. Patterson said the state's investment of \$480,000 through the Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act helped leverage more than \$4.2 million in other funding to make the project possible.

The new beach is about a mile long and more than 100 feet wide, stretching from Jettyview Road to Whelk Street. It now protects more than \$53 million worth of streets, sewers and homes. After the placement of more than 167,500 tons of sand, Surfside Beach is once again in business.

"I think members of the Legislature can feel good about their investment in this project," Laine said. "Surfside Beach is a great example of how a big beach project, where it makes economic sense, can save millions of dollars worth of public infrastructure. Surfside is worth saving." 🌀

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Looking east on Surfside Beach before the project.



Here's what Spring Breakers found after project completion.

# South Padre City Beach Gets Much Needed Sand

South Padre City Beach is wider and more alluring after a recent Texas General Land Office project placed about 370,000 cubic yards of sand on the popular destination. The nourishment project addresses one of the most critically eroding areas of beach along South Padre Island, earning the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association designation as a "Top Restored Beach."

The \$6.2 million project was a partnership between the Land Office's Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Act (CEPRA) program, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), and the city of South Padre Island, with \$2.7 million representing the combined Land Office and city cost-share of the project and \$3.5 million representing the federal contribution.

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and continue to make South Padre Island a sought after destination for beachgoers, visitors and vacationers. Similar very successful projects have been funded and implemented in three of the previous five CEPRA biennial cycles. 🐌



South Padre City Beach before the project.



South Padre City Beach after the project.

Continued protection of South Padre City Beach, as well as public and commercial infrastructure, was helped immensely through a Corps maintenance dredging project at the Brazos-Santiago Pass, part of the Brownsville Ship Channel navigation system. The material the Corps dredges from this section of the channel is composed of beach quality sand.

"The Corps needed to dredge, so we took advantage of the opportunity to get high-quality, low-cost sand on our beaches where it belongs," said Jerry Patterson, Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office. "Our job here at the Land Office was to get everyone working together to get this done."

The project was completed in only four weeks under a cooperative agreement with the Corps to beneficially use material dredged from the Brazos-Santiago Pass. South Padre City Beach was widened by about 50 feet for a distance of a mile, which will help revitalize the beach/dune system

## CMP Grant Cycle 17 Opens

The Texas Coastal Management Program (CMP) helps ensure the long-term environmental and economic health of the Texas coast through management of the state's coastal natural resource areas. The program is managed by the Coastal Coordination Council (CCC), a public/private council chaired by Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson. Texas is one of the few coastal states that pass substantial amounts of federal Coastal Zone Management Act funds through to coastal communities for projects in the coastal zone.

In February 2011, Commissioner Patterson announced \$1.7 million of Cycle 16 grant funding for 16 Texas coastal projects selected by a competitive grant process. The projects include habitat and marsh restoration, improving public access to the beach and re-

building oyster beds with recycled shells, just to name a few. A list of the selected projects is available at the Land Office website at <http://www.glo.texas.gov>.

"These projects will get a lot of bang for the buck," said Commissioner Patterson after grant funding was approved by the CCC, which oversees the CMP.

As the Land Office follows the successful implementation of the Cycle 16 projects, the agency again held planning workshops to help potential Grant Cycle 17 applicants through the grant application process. Workshops were held in Port Lavaca, Port Arthur, Corpus Christi, Port Isabel and Galveston. Commissioner Patterson, as chairman of the CCC, expects \$1.8 million will be available for coastal projects during Grant Cycle 17. 🐌



# Mad Island Shoreline Protection and Ecosystem Restoration —



**Eroded banks of the GIWW at Mad Island before construction.**

Waterway at the Mad Island Wildlife Management Area in Matagorda County. The project—funded by the Coastal Impact Assistance Program—provides protection to one of the most pristine areas along the Texas coast. HDR Engineering of Corpus Christi designed the breakwater, and Luhr Bros. of Missouri constructed it.

Completed in January, the new breakwater provides permanent protection for critically important terrestrial and marine wildlife habitat. The bayous and adjacent wetlands associated with the project area are part of a complex, very productive ecosystem ranging from saline to freshwater marshes. These marsh complexes provide habitat and refuge for high populations of several commercially and recreationally important marine and water-dependent wildlife species.

Erosion rates along this portion of the GIWW are an estimated 5-10 feet per year. By mitigating the effects of wave energy on unprotected

The Texas General Land Office, in collaboration with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and The Nature Conservancy of Texas, recently completed a 9,300-foot breakwater along the

shorelines, the breakwater curtails saltwater intrusion into brackish and freshwater coastal marshes.

Freshwater and brackish marshes support aquatic vegetation that is sensitive to changes in salinities yet important to fisheries and wildlife productivity. Erosive shortening of the bayous and erosion of the high marsh along the GIWW allows higher salinity waters into lower salinity marshes. Within the marsh, saltwater intrusion destroys the existing vegetation in freshwater and brackish marshes, leaving the marsh soils susceptible to erosion. Eventually, salt tolerant vegetation will colonize the area, but this is usually after the marsh has eroded, resulting in less productive, open-water areas.

Thanks to the Texas General Land Office and the CE-PRA project, emergent marsh vegetation is expected to become established between existing shorelines and the new rock breakwater, providing additional critical marine habitats where none currently exist. 🐌



**The new breakwater shields the Mad Island Wildlife Management Area.**

## Removing Derelict Vessels Makes the Texas Coast Safer



On January 6, the staff of the Land Office's Oil Spill Prevention and Response office in Nederland removed this odd derelict vessel from Adams Bayou in Orange County. The once-proud sailing boat—made of ferro-cement—weighed 15,000-20,000 pounds. Staff members had to pump rainwater out of the bilge and remove the mast before towing the boat 6 miles to a waiting crane. The lift, load and transport to a landfill 25 miles away went off without a hitch, thanks to excellent planning, coordination and management.

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# Experience the **TEXAS COAST**

**FREE!** MOODY GARDENS GALVESTON, TX  
**Saturday, June 18 ★ 10 am to 4 pm**



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The Texas General Land Office presents the second annual Texas Coastal Expo. Join us for a day of fun at Moody Gardens in Galveston as we spotlight one of our state's most important natural resources: the Texas coast.

Free for the whole family, experience Texas Coastal Expo with hands-on educational exhibits, wildlife shows and opportunities to see all the Texas coast has to offer. Find recreational "sun and surf" activities, as well as chances to learn about the plants and animals that make their homes on the Texas coast. Kids can pet a sea ray while parents try their wind surfing skills. Also learn about Land Office efforts to provide access to beach areas and ensure a healthy coast, pure gulf water and clean energy resources.

[texascoastalexp.org](http://texascoastalexp.org)

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